

ABSTRACTS

Russian society: between change and continuity

Carmen Claudín Urendo

If there has been any “shock therapy” in Russia, what has without a doubt been affected is the mentality, the collective psychology of the people. This dimension of the process going on in Russian society has been dealt with infrequently in scientific studies, which generally ignore its impact in their assessment of the changes in society. At the same time, the slanting of the data, with the extensive coverage given the different tragedies and catastrophes that have shaken Russia in recent years, keeps one from understanding how the people live, or in Western terms “survive”, or how there can be any talk of progress in Russia. These are the central issues this study addresses.

Ten years of the new Russia

Francesc Serra Massansalvador

This article analyzes developments in Russia since the breaking-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Given this objective, the author places particular emphasis on the debate on social and identity issues raised by the political and ideological transition from a USSR considered a superpower to a country that aspires to achieving political and economic stability and, ultimately, to retaining a limited area of influence as a regional power. In this, Russia has received strong, unconditional international support, which has allowed it to overcome various obstacles, but the difficult transition that the country has been through has made it impossible to avoid a severe collective trauma in terms of ideology and identity. The process has clearly been also accompanied by a significant disregard for the individual and collective rights of the Russian people, a price that, in the long term, may be too high a one to pay for a population that aspires to stability and for a country that aspires to respect and to equality with the rest of the world.

President and Parliament in Russia: a decade of tense relations

Lino Xavier València i Montes

The breaking-up of the Soviet state meant the birth of Russia as an independent state. This transformation was, however, not reflected in the new institutional design until the passage of the new constitution in 1993. The instability generated in Russia's institutional relations—specifically between the legislative and executive branches of government—has indeed lasted through the decade of Russia's independence as a state. During this period, the Federation President has taken on a dominant role in the political leadership of the state while the Parliament has been relegated to a secondary role in Russia's power structure. This situation has resulted in conflict between these institutions that has been marked by various situations and periods. After this brief review of the constitutional rules governing relations between the executive and legislative branches, the article focuses on an analysis of the periods this stormy relationship has gone through and then concludes with the important issue of the democratic nature or lack thereof of Russians.

The Russian economy: a decade of transition

Antonio Sánchez Andrés

In 1992 Russia began a reform process that has changed the face of the country. The Russian government's goal was the building of a market economy. This article analyzes the reforms undertaken by Russia over these last 10 years. It is divided into four sections that correspond to each of the four periods into which the decade can be divided on the basis of the reforms undertaken. The first examines the period 1992-94, characterized by structural reforms; the second, the phase between 1995-97, which was marked by certain economic stabilization phenomena; the third, the years 1998-2000, marked by political and economic changes; and the fourth, the Putin period. The article concludes by drawing a number of conclusions about the reforms undertaken and their relationship to the building of a market economy in Russia.

Against the rhetoric of complaint: the anthropology of the transformations in Russia

Valery Tishkov

This article is an X-ray of present-day Russian society whose point of departure are the changes experienced over the last 10 years from demography and population movements to changes in everyday life, civic identity and a description of the ruling class to norms of behavior and world views. The author concludes that while life in Russia has improved, it has also become more complicated.

Russian military doctrine: post-Soviet realities, the European perspective

José Miguel Palacios, Paloma Arana

The purpose of this article is to analyze developments in Russian military doctrine since the breaking-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and to relate them to the process of the Russian Federation's creating and developing its own foreign policy. The author examines the way the doctrine and foreign policy have departed from the Soviet legacy from which they sprang and have come to terms with Russia's new existence as an independent state with an international position that is less solid than was the USSR's in its day and with different allies and responsibilities. The article comes to the conclusion that the Russian doctrine has now reached a high degree of maturity, a fact that would lead one to expect that its development will depend chiefly on the changes going on in the international situation, and, specifically, on the position Russian adopts vis-à-vis the construction of a pan-European security system.

The post-cold war decade in the Caucasus: the wars in Chechnya

Nora Saínz Gsell

This article focuses on the conflict in Chechnya, its origins, development and international repercussions within the context of the Russian Federation and the more general context of the Caucasus, which since the end of the cold war has experienced the appearance of

new conflicts and the re-emergence of old ones, largely as a result of the economic and strategic value given to the region due both to the region's lying on the most direct route between the Caspian and Black Seas and well as to its natural gas and petroleum reserves.

Reflections on Russia and Central Asia: paths that cross and move apart

Augusto Soto

In the 1990's, Moscow's relations with the former Soviet republics of Central Asia developed, in part, in the context of the Community of Independent States (CIS). In turn, these republics have set their respective agendas in accordance with the courses they have taken, which have a common past but are subject to ensuing centrifugal forces but also to intertwining. In this context, the article reviews Moscow's relations with these republics and the factors they shared in this new coexistence. It also identifies the divergent forces that are accompanying this process and attempts to work out possible scenarios. Finally it seeks to make sense of the situation since September 11 when the area went from standing in the background to playing a role of some importance on the world stage.